

14 February 1977


MEMORANDUM FOR: Admiral Stansfield Turner

SUBJECT : Suggested Topics for Consideration
in Your Opening Statement to SSCI

A good starting point is always in the personal area. The Committee have your detailed biography, but you may wish to speak candidly of your professional achievements and qualifications for the appointment. You will wish to refer to your considerable experience as a consumer and occasional producer of intelligence. On balance, we do not believe that you need to initiate discussion of the relative merits of civilian and military incumbents of the Office of Director of Central Intelligence; on the other hand, the issue of your active-duty status has been publicly raised, and you may wish to take the initiative in commenting on this matter. Finally, it will be of interest to the Committee and to the Community if you would say some words about the origins of your appointment; this will help put on record once again the President's esteem and confidence which he has expressed in you.

Following I have listed a number of suggested topics for your consideration, and ultimately, very briefly, some topics which you may wish not to address on this occasion. All of these are the result of coordinated input here at Langley.

I am also enclosing copies of Messrs. Bush's and Knoche's nomination hearings.


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Intelligence

First-rate intelligence provides the essential building blocks of sound policy decision. Whether the decision is one of peace-keeping, of military strategy, of economic policy, or of any combination of these, intelligence must be objective, independent, and must be the product of the best possible collection and analysis mechanisms. Since President Truman first determined to provide a mechanism for coordinating information from various collection and analysis points by creating the Central Intelligence Agency, we have made further progress in maintaining a system which, to the maximum extent possible, provides the President and the National Security Council with intelligence that is free of political and institutional bias. At the same time, since the intelligence product includes an element of the unknowable, difference of view is natural and must, as appropriate, be reflected.

Accountability

The Central Intelligence Agency and the entire Community share with the other departments and agencies of the federal government the fundamental obligation to be accountable to the American people. The statutes that impose on the Director of Central Intelligence the legal responsibility for the protection of sources and methods of intelligence and other valid considerations of protecting national security and the integrity of our foreign relations make it impossible for the operation of the intelligence arm of the U. S. Government to be subjected to the kind of public discussion that is customary in our system of government. Furthermore, the work product of the Intelligence Community must be submitted by the Director of Central Intelligence to the President and his advisers in the National Security Council without being burdened by improper public exposure. For that reason a relationship of trust, responsibility, responsiveness, and mutual respect must exist between the Director of Central Intelligence and the Congress of the United States, and specifically this Committee which on behalf of the American people is responsible for the oversight of this country's foreign intelligence activities. The confirmation hearing of an incoming Director by the Committee is the beginning of this relationship.

Public Understanding and Support

Intelligence, as a major component of foreign policy, does not always have the understanding and support of the public which it needs for effectiveness and success. The major difficulty in this area is, of course, the need to protect the secrecy of those things that must be kept secret. At the same time there is a continuing challenge to recognize the obligation that the Intelligence Community has to the public which can be discharged by a continuing effort to make available in unclassified form as much information as it is possible to handle in this manner. The development of constructive relationships between the Intelligence Community and the Congress is absolutely necessary to gain public confidence in the institution of intelligence and public understanding for the need to maintain legitimate secrecy in those areas where there is no alternative to secrecy. Without public confidence, no institution can succeed. Working within the Executive Department and with legislative oversight bodies, you will want to continue the process of re-establishing public confidence in American intelligence.

The American people will be assured that the Intelligence Community, and specifically the Central Intelligence Agency, is committed to the fulfillment of its fundamental purpose

Public Understanding and Support

and mandate -- the provision of reliable and objective intelligence to the policy maker while remaining within the bounds of law and propriety. In carrying out this principal role, the Director of Central Intelligence will be guided by a few basic imperatives:

Intelligence cannot assume positions of advocacy.

It cannot surrender to any degree its obligation to be independent and objective.

Its product and analysis must be made as widely available as possible to all concerned with foreign policy matters.

It must reflect an unreserved and complete commitment to excellence.

Director of Central Intelligence and the Community

The United States must continue to sustain a foreign intelligence capability second to none. The increasing sophistication of collection techniques and technology and, at the same time, the growing complexity of the analysis needed to assure excellence of the finished intelligence product combine into a challenge of intellectual leadership and resource management facing the Director of Central Intelligence. He must recognize that the various intelligence organizations of the United States must truly operate as a Community in which tasks and costs are shared in the interests of effectiveness. In his role as head of that Community, he must maintain emphasis on mutual support and coordination, on improving techniques of evaluating the effectiveness of the total effort, and on assuring proper consideration at all times of the needs and problems of all elements of the Community. To be effective, the Intelligence Community must do more than provide the best possible intelligence on the world as it is and as it is developing. It must be consistently looking forward as well. It must anticipate problems before they reach crisis proportions and assure that the President and his policy advisers are given timely and reliable warning on matters which could prove certainly adverse to the United States interests.

Director of Central Intelligence as the President's Foreign Intelligence Adviser

In his role as the President's chief intelligence adviser, the Director of Central Intelligence must be prepared to give the President objective substantive assessments. This means that he must be able to take positions independent of departmental ones when he deems it necessary, a requirement that in turn demands that he have independent analytic resources to assist him in evaluating departmental views. It has been the traditional view that these resources are provided to him directly as head of the Central Intelligence Agency which by statute is the organization responsible for the national intelligence production.

According to this traditional view, one of the complexities of the DCI-CIA relationship is that he needs the Central Intelligence Agency to support his substantive independence. Yet, the more he identifies with any one Agency or department, the more vulnerable he becomes to the perception of being the captive of that agency or department.

Ultimately, the President with your advice will have to decide what that relationship should be. For the purposes of confirmation, we would suggest that you not commit yourself to a definitive view. You will want to reach your own conclusions in working out with the President whatever

Director of Central Intelligence as the President's Foreign
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you determine the role of the Director of Central Intelligence should be. Whether you retain the direct tie to the Central Intelligence Agency or become an "intelligence czar" without a direct tie to any single agency in the Community, is a question you can legitimately reserve for the future -- say the next six months or so.

Covert Action

You may wish to pre-empt, or at least fairly anticipate, an almost certain area of enquiry by outlining your basic view of the principles of covert action in the opening statement.

In a world where a strong defense capability must be maintained by the United States, the President must retain every viable option for the protection of our vital national interests. One such option, to be used sparingly in an approved contingency, is covert action. It must be properly authorized and effectively supervised and carried out. Thus conceived, covert action constitutes a legitimate means of defending ourselves and our allies, providing a middle ground between diplomacy and military action.

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